

APPROVED MINUTES FOR TOWN BOARD MEETING

MAPLE, WI

Thursday, October 12, 2023

The monthly meeting for the Town of Maple was called to order by Chairman Dustin Soyring at 7:00 pm at the Maple Community Center.

ROLL CALL

Chairman Dustin Soyring, Supervisor Jon TePoel, Supervisor Thad Lintula, Treasurer Tanya Colby, Foreman Roger Colby, Fire Chief Mike Lundeen, Planning Commission Secretary Gaye Erkel, Clerk Rachel Lintula, County Supervisor Scott Loustari and a handful of community members were in attendance. There being a quorum, the meeting was called to order.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION by Supervisor Lintula, seconded by TePoel, and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of September 14, 2023.

TREASURER'S REPORT

MOTION by Supervisor TePoel, seconded by T. Lintula, and carried unanimously to approve the Treasurer's report.

BRIEF PUBLIC COMMENT

Resident Terry Johnson noted that a handful of signs in the town needed to be replaced.

David Grapentine and Marty Laakso raised questions about agenda and supporting materials distribution. Clerk Lintula agreed on the need for clarification and referenced the Agenda and Minutes Distribution Policy on the agenda.

One resident - who wished to remain anonymous - expressed concerns about the public water access at the Fire Department in a letter. Please see attached. Discussion included the difficulty in policing the resource. The well was replaced in 2023 - the old well was from the early 1970s and thus lasted 50+ years. According well experts, use doesn't hurt the well and in fact is better for water quality.

Fire Chief Lundeen and Foreman Colby noted the importance of having the well active in order to complete their respective tasks efficiently and effectively; namely, filling pumper trucks and having ready access to water to steam culverts during the winter and spring.

Discussion also included what's been done in the past to discourage overuse; e.g., slowing the water flow and removing the faucet threads to prevent hose attachments. Fire Chief Lundeen further noted that the issues of access and user abuse have been ongoing for nearly twenty years.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Follow-up on Open Meetings Law concerns

A resident expressed reservations at the September 14, 2023 meeting about how the board handled a claim against the Town of Maple, noting that she believed the meeting should have been held in closed

session and the claimant's name withheld. Clerk Lintula followed up on her concern with the Wisconsin Towns Association (WTA). Per the consultation, Lintula confirmed that discussing the advice of the town's insurance provider, rather than the town's attorney, would not allow a closed session. Had the board met in closed session, they would have violated Open Meetings Law.

Regarding the name of a claimant, any document (including the ultimate lawsuit against the town) that informs the town of a claim is a public record subject to disclosure under the public records law. As such, the name of the claimant would be available publicly.

2. *Appoint Gaye Erkel (officially!) to the Planning Commission.*

MOTION by Chairman Soyering, seconded by T. Lintula, and carried unanimously to approve Gaye Erkel's appointment to the Planning Commission.

3. *Update on moving the Town's website and email to the maple.wi.gov domain; review and discuss the need for each town official to have an official town email address.*

Clerk Lintula noted that she has been working with Citon to move along the process of securing the domain maple.wi.gov. The state is encouraging municipalities to adopt a .gov domain, in an effort to improve election security, among other things. The town will be eligible for a \$600 reimbursement grant from the Wisconsin Elections Commission, to help offset the costs. Clerk Lintula also spoke to the need for each town official to have a town email address to conduct town business so as to avoid potential Wisconsin Public Records Law violations.

NEW BUSINESS

1. *Review and discuss the 2023-24 snow plowing season; update the plowing application and fee schedule as needed.*

Discussion included the rising costs of fuel - the cost of fuel doubled from 2021 to 2022 - as well as the fact that the town can't subsidize an optional service with tax revenues. In other words, the cost to the town to provide the service and the cost to the residents who've self-selected the service need to be balanced.

Chairman Soyering further noted that in other parts of the state businesses offering snow plowing services charge a \$500 fee that covers a certain number of plows; needed services over that number are charged on an additional per time basis. On average, the Town of Maple plows a driveway ten times during the winter; some driveways may be plowed more than 25 times, depending on drifting.

Additionally, the town is not required to offer snowplowing and Soyering noted that many towns are no longer offering snow plowing services; in fact, the Town of Amnicon will not offer snow plowing services to its residents this upcoming winter season.

MOTION by Chairman Soyering to set fee at \$300 for all applications postmarked by November 12; to set the fee at \$350 for all applications postmarked by December 12; and to set the fee at \$400 for any applications postmarked thereafter. MOTION seconded by Supervisor Lintula and motion carried unanimously.

2. *Review and discuss an Agenda and Minute Distribution Policy that clarifies agenda and minute posting locations, distribution, and access.*

Clerk Lintula drafted a policy that outlined and clarified agenda and minute posting locations, distribution, and access. Before the Town Board adopts the policy, she will follow up with the WTA to confirm that supporting materials need not be included when the agenda is posted given that those materials are typically incomplete when the agenda is posted.

3. *Review and discuss developing a fireworks permit application that town residents can access online.*

Discussion included streamlining the application process by adding a fireworks permit to the website; by state law, residents are required to get a fireworks permit from the municipality when discharging fireworks. The permit functions much the same way as a burning permit: it's free, it supports public safety, and it requires that the user assume all liability for the display.

Clerk Lintula will follow-up on the existing permit on file and bring it to the board at a later date.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. *County Supervisor*

Supervisor Loustari gave an overview of the county at large - noting that the board heard a presentation from representatives of the North Trail Energy Center. The representatives are hopeful it will go through - at this point, the company is waiting on two permits. If approved, the project would bring an estimated \$750 million in revenue and 300 construction jobs.

In terms of budgets, rising personnel and health care costs require significant fund allocations. In addition, there's a steep reduction in forestry budgets due to the damages sustained over the winter. For comparison purposes: \$1,000,000 in 2023; \$500,000 in 2024. However, the county - like most municipalities - will receive a significant bump in state shared revenues. The county will set the budget on October 31, 2023.

Campground zoning continues to be slow to resolve and unfortunately, the county's land conservation head is taking on a new job; she will be hard to replace.

Within the county proper, roads, ditches, and fields have been torn up by people resulting in significant damages. The county Sheriff has been notified and will bolster surveillance.

2. *Town Foreman*

Foreman Colby noted that the grading, gravel application, and general road maintenance continue. The Gonchoreck culvert install is complete and the town is eligible for County Roads and Bridges Aid. In addition, the Blueberry Road project was completed using the newly purchased road disc. The equipment more than paid for itself - no lift rental was required - and both fabric and gravel was used in the project.

The town pick-up is fixed, though it will need tires before the snow season to drive safely.

3. *Fire Department*

The Department responded to 12 Emergency Calls this past month: Maple had 4 EMS, 2 MVA calls and 3 Alarms; Poplar had 1 EMS call and Lake Nebagamon had 1 EMS call.

EMS Flex grant paperwork sent in to finish out the grant.

Hose testing is complete and three 50 foot hose that failed the test and require replacement.

The Maple Fire Department - along with other local fire departments - participated in a Fire Prevention event at NES, "Cooking Safety Starts with You." The Department spent two days at the school, discussing home safety as well as showing students trucks and equipment.

Remodeling of the office at the fire station continues; the Carpenter Local #361 apprentices donated their time and skills, building a wall in the meeting/training area and taping and mudding the first coat on the sheetrock walls in the office. A big thank you to them!

Fire Chief Lundeen also noted that town roads leading to the high school are often congested during high school events. If EMS was required, vehicles would be unable to quickly reach the injured party due to the congested parking. The town may need to work with the school to rectify the issue.

4. Planning Commission

Secretary Erkel was not present to give a report.

FUTURE BUSINESS

- 1. Chairman Soyering noted that he's been heavily involved at the county level in steering the new LRIP pilot. He plans to submit a 90 /10 grant application for Haukkala Road; it's likely to be denied as most grants are funded at the 70/30 level. Nonetheless, it will be a useful exercise in terms of gaining grant application experience and the town could receive the 90/10 grant!*

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Supervisor TePoel to adjourn the meeting at 8:38; motion seconded by Supervisor Lintula and motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Rachel Lintula, Clerk